1: Nimuendajú E-5 (1929-1936) 1946 SOS Timbira SOS

mitting it to drop to the ground. If a player at last allows it to fall, it is not picked up, but Rąrą'k throws a new one into the ring until all the shuttlecocks are forfeited.

After midnight the men of both rainy season moieties assemble by two fires in the plaza, whither a man named Kái brings them a bundle of unfeathered arrows with balls of maize husk covering their points (pl. 16, *a*). The players step up in pairs (so as to represent in each case both moieties) and try to hit each other with the arrows, which they throw with their hands.

In 1929, during my first visit, when I had not yet come to understand anything of the ceremonial, I had the following experience. An Indian wishing to show me a special favor had some sweet potatoes brought from the plantation for my delectation before the harvest time had been officially announced. In my innocence I eulogized the generous donor before the elders in the plaza, but at once noted the silent, but significant glances passed among them. The donor was thus placed in an ambiguous position and incurred censure, though in deference to me this was not carried too far. However, the culprit was obliged to hurry to the plaza with a bowlful of baked sweet potatoes for the elders, who consumed them and declared the crop ready for harvesting. Similarly I observed that they received two watermelons when the harvest for these fruits was opened.

Another ceremony, hõčwa (= pointed leaf, i.e., sweet potato), is devoted to the sweet potatoes. It always takes place when these plants produce their vines, immediately preceding the ceremony just described of opening the maize harvest. The performers, numbering some twenty, are organized like the festive organizations, but their activities are confined to this single annual appearance at the hõčwa. As in these other societies, membership is inherited matrilineally with the personal name. The lodge is situated on the north side of the eastern half of the village circle. Like the other societies, this, too, has a leader, the hõčwakédeti (grandfather of the hõčwa). He wears hanging down the nape of his neck from a neck cord a feather from the tail of a red arara. The present incumbent is the chief Hąktokót, but the title hõčwa itself belongs to the bearer of the name Rąrą'k, who in this capacity wears falcon down on his body and has a little whistle of Mataco type.[38] The participants also include a precentor and two girl auxiliaries.

The members paint the entire body with white clay, and their faces are marked with two obtuse-angled parallel lines traced with the finger tips with the same pigment. The apex of one of these angles is on the forehead, while its sides extend over the temples; the point of the other angle is on the tip of the nose and its sides are drawn across the cheeks.

The hõčwa actor proper is decorated at sunset. At nightfall a big fire is kindled in the plaza, where the precentor remains waiting. Finally the hõčwa leaves his maternal home and walks to the plaza, where the precentor begins singing to the accompaniment of a rattle, while the hõčwa, with his pinčwę'ipey behind him, sounds his whistle. Thereupon the hõčwakédeti steps out of his maternal house, dances toward the plaza, but immediately returns in order to bring with him the entire membership, who now dance in the plaza with outstretched arms.

Toward midnight all the women and girls come out of their houses and range themselves in groups at the opening of the radial paths leading from their maternal homes to the plaza. The hõčwa march round the plaza from group to group, singing before each of them.

The object of this ceremony is to ensure for each extended family an adequate supply of sweet potatoes, corresponding to the number of its female members.

[38] Izikowitz, Musical Instruments, 333.